

A S O B E R

8536

# R E P L Y,

On Behalf of the People called

## Q U A K E R S,

To Two Petitions against them,

(The One out of *Norfolk*, and the  
Other from *Bury in Suffolk*)

Being some Brief Observations upon them.

Published on Occasion of *Francis Bugg's* Exposing One  
of the said Petitions in Print, and Commending the  
Other, &c. With many unjust Aggravations and  
Misrepresentations in his late Book, falsely stiled

*A Modest Defence, &c.*

*Thos. Ellwood*

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*It is an Honour for a Man to cease from Strife, but every Fool  
will be meddling, Prov. 20. 3.*

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London, Printed and Sold by T. Sowle, in *White-Hart-Court*  
in *Gracious-Street*, 1699.

THE  
 R. S. P. L. Y.

and the  
 R. S. P. L. Y.

Being some brief observations upon them.  
 and the  
 R. S. P. L. Y.

to be an honor for a man to read from such a book  
 and the  
 R. S. P. L. Y.

## *A Reply, on Behalf of the People called Quakers, to Two Petitions against them, &c.*

**T**Hat we may not build too *large* a *Porch* to so *small* an *House*, we shall only premise, That the Christian Religion hath *often Suffered*, but *never taught* or countenanced *Persecution*; That it was the *Persecuting Jews*, not the *Persecuted Apostle*, who cry'd *Men of Israel, help*, Acts 21. 28. That these *Petitioners* against us, have nothing to Charge us with of *Immorality*, nothing against the *Publick Peace*, nothing but what concerns our *Religion*: Which is an implicit Acknowledgment (at least) that they are in the same Streight to find out Matter of Accusation against us, that *Daniel's* Adversaries were in, to find Matter against him; who thereupon ingeniously confest, *We shall not find any Occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God*, Dan. 6. 5.

We begin with the *Norfolk Petition*, as that which (we understand) was contrived first, and probably led on the other.

*Petition.* We cannot, without *Resentment*, take notice of the great Growth, and daily Increase of the Quakers, and the Mischief and Dangers from thence threatening this Nation.

*Observation.* We hope we may, without incurring their *Resentment*, observe, That the *Jews* of old took notice, and that not without *Resentment*, of the great Growth and daily Increase of the *Christians*, in the first Age of the spreading of the Gospel, and of the Mischief and Dangers they apprehended did from thence threaten their Nation, *John* 11. 48. Which Misapprehension of theirs, made them bend their Forces against the *Innocent Christians*, to Suppress, Destroy, and Root them out. Whereby they

they brought upon Themselves, and their Nation, the Mischief and Dangers they feared : God avenging, by the hands of the *Romans*, and their own one against another, their Evil Treatment of his Son and Servants.

Pet. 'Tis observable, with what restless Zeal their deluding Teachers—ramble into all parts of these Kingdoms.

Obs. 'Tis probable, the little Zeal (unless for Maintenance) the *Petitioners* have observed in their own over-*rested* Teachers, makes the Zeal of those they Petition against so observable to them. But they may do well also to observe (which if they will not, it may be hoped, They to whom they have Petitioned, will) how much this Charge, of *Restless Zeal*, renders us like unto the *Apostles* and Primitive Christian Teachers, whose *Restless Zeal* would not suffer them to sit down, and rest in a Fat Benefice (with a *Curat* to perform the Service for them :) But made them Travel into most of the then Civilized Parts of the World, as the *Acts of the Apostles*, and *Ecclesiastical Histories* shew. And though their Enemies then were more modest than to call it *Rambling*; yet they failed not to call them *Deluding Teachers*; as these do us.

Pet. And (as we suspect) many *Romish* Emissaries under their Disguise.

Obs. The *Petitioners* should have done well to have given the Ground of this *Suspicion* of theirs, if they had any to give, that it might have been examined. But to Suggest (for it is probable this came, *è Suggesto*, out of the Pulpit : For *Justices*, we hope, would deal more justly) so Scandalous a Matter, upon a bare *Suspicion*, without assigning any Ground for it, is (to speak modestly of it) an *Evil-Surmising*, and against *Charity* : For *Charity* (we are assured, 1 Cor. 13. 5.) thinks no Evil. And since *Charity* is so excellent a Christian Vertue, as to be preferr'd to both *Faith* and *Hope*, verse 13. We are sorry  
to

to find *so little Charity* among the Justices and Grand Jurors of *Norfolk*. This Suspicion of *Romish Emissaries* going under the Disguise of *Quakers*, is indeed an *old Scandal* rais'd by *our profest Enemies*, the Priests, above Forty Years ago, and by them industriously spread, and kept up ever since, on purpose to Traduce us to the better sort of People. But is it not strange, that if this had been true, not one *single Instance* could be given, not one *Proof* made in all this time, of one *Romish Emissary* found among the *Quakers*! This alone is enough to baffle the Slander: which it hath done already with considerate Persons. Therefore, without taking further notice of it here, we will conclude with Queen *Elizabeth's* Motto (used while she was Princess, Persecuted and a Prisoner) *viz. Much suspected by me. Nothing proved can be.*

Pet. And boldly spread their Venemous Doctrines every where.

Obs. This *Venemous* Epithet so ill becomes *Justices* and *Grand Jurors*, that we are not willing to think it theirs; but rather imposed on them by some of their *dictating Teachers*. But passing by the *Venome* of it, we cannot but observe here likewise, how much they make us, even in this also, to resemble those, whom we desire and labour to imitate, the Apostles of our Lord. Whose *Boldness*, in Asserting the Christian Faith, and Spreading the Doctrine of their Holy Religion ( which, no doubt, their *Opposers*, the *Priests* of that Age, and such *Rulers* as those Priests could influence ) thought to be *wrong*, though they seem to have been *more modest*, than to call it *Venemous* ) made, even their Adversaries *Marvel*; who yet were so ingenuous as to impute their Boldness to their having been with *Jesus*, Acts 4. 13.

Pet.

*Pet. Attempting to infect and shake the Minds of weak Protestants.*

*Obs.* Had not those Protestants *weak Teachers*, they would not be such *weak Protestants*. Nor will it, peradventure, upon due Consideration, be found a Dis-service in the *Quakers*, if by their *Zealous Preaching*, they excite those Teachers ( how unwillingly soever ) to be *more Zealous*, more Assiduous, more Laborious and Diligent in Preaching, to strengthen their *weak Hearers*.

*Pet. And Assuming Rules of Discipline, Power in matters of Religion, and Forms of Government, Repugnant to the Establish'd Laws of this Kingdom, contrary to the very Acts of Toleration, and not allow'd to any other Dissenters.*

*Obs.* We presume it is intended, in all the Branches of this manifold Charge [*with respect to themselves only*,] and we hope it will be so understood; That if we assume *Rules of Discipline* in Church Matters, they are for *our selves only*; *Power* in Matters of Religion, for and amongst *our selves only*. As for *Forms of Government*, though they are Ambiguous Words, and such as we do not use amongst, or of, our selves: Yet as there ought to be *Government* in every *Religious*, as well as *Civil*, Society; and a Form, or Forms of such Government: So we know of no Form of Government in our Religious Society, no Rules of Discipline, no Power in Matters of Religion, among us, that is Repugnant to the Establish'd Laws of this Kingdom, relating only to *Civil* Matters, nor contrary to the *Acts* for Toleration. Nor ( with Submission to our Superiours ) do we see, how those Acts could be truly called *Acts of Toleration* to Dissenters, if they did not *Tolerate* each sort of Dissenters, to *Assume Rules of Discipline*, *Power* in Matters of Religion, and Forms of Church Government, for and amongst themselves, while nothing is thereby done Repugnant to the *Publick Peace*. Nor do we understand, but that the same is allow'd to, and practic'd by all other Protestant Dissenters. *Vouch-*

*Pet. Vouching in all their Actions Divine Inspiration for their Warrant, and the Indulgence of the Government for their Indemnity.*

*Obj. In All their Actions, is too large an Expression, and shews the Petitioners spake by rote. But if we vouch Divine Inspiration for our Warrant in some things, which relate more immediately to the Worship and Service of God (and undertake withal to make appear, that That Inspiration is not disagreeable to the Divine Testimonies recorded in the Holy Scriptures) we hope our Warrant will not be disliked, for being Grounded on Inspiration, nor that Inspiration, for being Divine: And that the Indulgence of so Indulgent a Government will be sufficient to Indemnifie us, in our Peaceable Performance thereof.*

*Pet. How apparently their Blasphemous Books, and Pernicious Principles, tend to subvert the Fundamentals of Christianity, and undermine the Civil Government, are sufficiently Demonstrable.*

*Obj. Demonstrable! Not yet Demonstrated then, it seems, tho' for these Forty Years, and more, it has been endeavoured. Hard Words and Ill Names may easily be put upon the best Books and Principles. And there is no Book or Principle, which may not, by Perversion and Misconstruction, be made to look and sound Ill. But sure we are (and always ready to make appear) that neither are our Books Blasphemous, nor our Principles Pernicious. The Fundamentals of Christianity we heartily Own, and Assert as Boldly and Vigorously as any. And how far we have been from undermining the Civil Government, our Practice, well known throughout these Kingdoms, is the best Demonstration.*

*Pet. The Publishing whereof, by pretended Permission of the Government, is of most dangerous Consequence.*

*Obj. Pray give the Government leave to judge of that. So long as the Church of Rome could stop the Publishing of*



any *Books* or *Principles*, but her own, the Christian World lay very Snug, in a deep *Sleep* of *Darkness* and *Profound Ignorance*, which she had lul'd it into, which was what she desired. And if the first *Reformers* had been debarr'd the Liberty of *Publishing* their *Books*, and *Principles*, the *Reformation* must either not have been begun, or greatly retarded in the carrying of it on, and *Popery* might have prevailed still. It is a sure *Maxim*, that *Truth is Strongest*. And therefore, they who have *Truth on their side*, and who know their own Principles to be *Sound*, need not fear the Publishing of Principles by others; for if those Principles publish'd by others be *true*, they co-operate with theirs; and therein they have Cause to rejoyce: If *false*, they have thereby a fair Occasion given them, by exposing and confuting the *Errors* thereof, to illustrate more clearly, and establish more firmly, the true Principles asserted by themselves; and for that they have no cause to be Sorry.

Thus for the Petition out of *Norfolk*, the *Prayer* of which shall be considered together with that from *Bury*, which will help to explain one another.

The Petition from *Bury* speaks in the Name of *The Alderman, Assistant Justice, chief Burges and Burgesses of the Common Council, in behalf of themselves and other the Inhabitants of that Burrough*; And in it they say,

*Pet.* That we, considering all *Ancient Hæresies*, which have vexed both Church and State, were never so formidable in their Rise and Progress, as are the *Quakers*.

*Obf.* Are then the *Alderman* and *Burgesses* of *Bury* acquainted with, and versed in, *All Ancient Hæresies*? Or do they rely upon the assistance of their assistant *Justice*? Or do both They and He take this upon trust from some not very trusty *Parson*. Have they read, examined, considered the vexation, the Spoil, the Havock, of both *Estates* and *Lives*, and almost *Desolation*, made in both Church



Church and State, by the *Arian Hæresie* alone, so tragically set forth by *Ruffinus, Socrates Scholasticus, Theodoret* and *Sozomen* in their *Ecclesiastical Histories*? Or if they have, can they, without blushing, say, The *Arrian Hæresie*, and all other *Ancient Hæresies*, were never so formidable in their Rise and Progress, as are the Quakers; Who are the Quakers formidable to, unless to the Priests? And wherein to them? Unless the Quakers Zeal (which they so complain of) makes them fear, that they must both *Preach better* and *Live better*, or else they will be in danger to lose the best of their Hearers, and perhaps with them, what they value more than them, some of their Maintenance? But they say,

Pet. We have too just a Cause of dreading the Subversion of our Government by them, if not carefully prevented and suppressed.

Obj. Our Government! What do they mean, The Government of the Burrough of *Bury St. Edmonds* by the Aldermen, assistant Justice, chief Burgesses and Burgesses of the Common Council there? We never understood that any Quaker hath attempted to meddle with their Government, or intrude into it; but rather, that some have declin'd it, when invited thereunto. If they mean the Government of England, we hope they will not so appropriate it to themselves, as to exclude their Fellow-Subjects from a Share in the Care, Support and Preservation thereof; which we (and all other Protestant Dissenters) have as much reason as they (with respect to our Estates, Liberties and Lives) to wish and seek the Welfare and Safety of. And we humbly appeal to the Governours themselves, whether we have given any just Cause, by our Carriage, Deportment and Behaviour, to and under the Government, for any to Dread the Subversion of the Government by us.

Pet. *Being in their Clandestine Constitutions opposite to the Condition of our established Polity.*

Obs. What they mean, by *Clandestine Constitutions*, we know not; nor what, by the *Condition of their established Polity*: But this we know, that as we have nothing which we call *Constitutions*; so neither any thing that is *Clandestine*, or done in a *Clandestine* way among us.

Pet. *And in their Principles of Faith Anti-christian.*

Obs. So did the Church of Rome object to the *Protestants* in general upon the *Reformation*, as Bp. Jewel, in his *Apolo-  
gy* for the Church of England, observes, *Clamant hodie  
passim* (says he, p. 7.) *Nos omnes esse Hereticos, discessis-  
se à fide*, &c. *They cry out now a-days, That we are all He-  
reticks, That we are departed from the Faith*, &c. But if  
that was a *false Charge* against them; we are sure, this  
is not a *true Charge* against us. For we sincerely and  
heartily own all that is written in the Holy Scriptures  
concerning *Christ*, with respect to his *Conception, Birth,  
Life, Miracles, Doctrines, Sufferings, Death, Burial, Re-  
surrection, Ascension, Mediation* and future *Coming to  
Judgment*. Which we take to be the *Sum of true Chri-  
stian Faith*; and which whosoever rightly believes,  
ought not (we think) to be accounted *Anti-christian* in  
Principles of Faith.

Pet. *Of Government Anti-monarchical.*

Obs. One would think this *Arrow* also had been taken  
out of the *Papists* Quiver against *Protestants*, to exactly  
does it resemble what the same *Jewell*, in the same place,  
says, the *Papist* charged them withal. Where, having reci-  
ted a large *Beadroll* of particular *Slanders* cast upon  
them, *Clamant* (says he) *nos id agere et querere, ut Mo-  
narchia et Regnorum Status evertantur*, &c. *They cry, that  
we do these things, with purpose thereby to overturn Monar-  
chies and the States of Kingdoms*. We doubt not but  
this was *unduly* charged upon them. But nothing could

be more *falsly* suggested against us, whose *avowed Principle* and *known Practice*, it has always been to yield a peaceable and quiet *Subjection* to the Powers which God hath set over us.

Pet. *In point of Doctrine Anti-Scriptural.*

Obf. *We deny that*; and are ready to undertake the Proof of every Doctrine we hold, by and from the Scriptures.

Pet. *And in Practices Illegal.*

Obf. This also, if it relate to *Civil* matters, we deny, as *utterly false*; and may, we hope with modesty; say, That no People are more *conformable to the Laws*, in things *Civil*, than we. And if it relate to *Religious Performances*, as it seems to do, by the words next following, *viz. [Having their Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings.]* We shall need to say no more to it but this, That if we, and other Dissenters, could have *actually* comply'd with whatsoever the Laws required in *Matters of Religion*, there would not have been room for *Indulgence*, or need of an Act of *Toleration*.

Pet. *Having their Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, which we cannot but reasonably believe tend, not only to the Subversion of our Laws, but of our Religion also, to us of greater concerns than our Lives.*

Obf. To *Believe* is one thing; to believe *reasonably* (or to have *Reason* to believe, is another thing: Which if these Petitioners pretend to have, they should (if they expected to be believed) have assigned the Reasons of their so *believing*. Well known it is to the Nation in general, and to the Government in particular, that we have had *Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings* (and those *the same* that now we have, and for the same Services) many Years before the Government was pleased to grant the present *Indulgence*; yea, and that in the times of the greatest Troubles, and hottest Persecutions:

Which was an Evidence, *beyond bare saying so*, That our Religion was of greater Concern to us than our Lives. But what one single Act or thing have any, or all of those Meetings of ours produced, in all this time, that has tended to the *Subversion* of the Laws, or Establiſhed Religion? Do not both the one, and the other, *ſtand now*, at this very day, as *Safe and Firm* as ever they did, at leaſt for us? Can it reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that if thoſe Meetings of ours had ſo *dangerous* a Tendency, as to *Subvert* the Laws and Religion of the Nation, the *Piercing* Eye of the *Government* ſhould not ſee it as well, and as ſoon, as the *Aldermen* and *Burgeſſes* of *Bury*? How come they, now all of a ſudden, to be ſo *Eagle-Ey'd*, to pretend to ſee that, which *their Betters* (and who have much *better* Advantages for ſeeing) could never yet ſee! For can it be imagined, that if our *Governours* had ſeen, or ſuſpected, our Meetings to have ſo *Evil* and *Dangerous* a Tendency, as is here Suggested, they would ſo Propitiouſly have *Indulged* *theſe Meetings*, and granted us a *Toleration* thus to hold them; We wiſh theſe Petitioners would think well of this; and conſider whether it was *decent* for the *Aldermen* and *Burgeſſes* of *Bury* thus to *Impeach* the *Wiſdom* and *Conduct* of the *Government*.

Hitherto they have ſpoken in the *Accuſative* Caſe: They now turn to the *Vocative*, Invoking the Parliament againſt us. As therefore we have made brief Obſervations on the Charges: Let us now, as briefly, take notice of the *Prayer* in each Petition; which we choſe to conſider together, becauſe one ſeems to explain the other.

That out of *Norfolk* muſt be acknowledged to ſpeak the more modeſtly of the two. For it Prays the Houſe of Commons, *To take theſe things* (the Charges in the Body of the Petition mentioned) *into Conſideration, that the ſaid Principles and Practices may be ſtrictly Examined, and Censured, or Suppreſſed, as they ſhall appear to deſerve, and as*

*in their great Wisdom shall seem expedient. Nor is it wholly destitute of some Shew of Tenderness towards us: For it prays This may be done, With whatsoever Tenderness to the Persons and Estates of these People. But as it can hardly be conceived, how Principles and Practices flowing therefrom (especially where Divine Inspiration, as these Petitioners say, is vouched for Warrant thereof) can be Suppress'd, without exercising great Cruelty (the Opposite to Tenderness) on the Persons or Estates of the People, whose Principles and Practices they are: So, if the Prayer of the other Petition from Bury (which was Formed after this, and comes from their near Neighbours) may pass for a Comment upon the Norfolk-Text, it will not be very difficult to find, what, in the softer Norfolk Dialect, is meant by Suppressing our Principles and Practices. For the Alderman and Burgeses of Bury say, We therefore, oblig'd in Duty to God and our Country, do humbly pray your timely Consideration of our Jealousies, and remove our Fears; if not by totally Suppressing, yet at least by preventing their after Growth and Increase amongst us. Here, after an acknowledgment, that all those High Charges, exhibited against us in the Petition, are grounded but upon their own (groundless) Jealousies, they (how mannerly, let others judge) offer the Parliament Hobson's Choice, either totally to Suppress us, or at least to prevent our after Growth and Increase; which perhaps cannot be done, without totally suppressing us; or if it could, must needs tend to a total Suppressing of us. Now if they, who have declared their Religion to be of greater Concern to them than their Lives, could find in their Hearts to have so much Charity for their Neighbours, as to admit our Religion to be of greater Concern to us than our Lives (which we think we have given a full proof of, to say no more, as ever they have done) they might thence reasonably conclude, that we will part with*

our *Lives*, rather than with our *Religion*; and that there is no way *totally to Suppress us*, but by *Cutting our Throats*, or *Knocking out our Brains*: Which must therefore be supposed to be their Meaning. And would they have the *Honourable the Commons of England in Parliament Assembled*, undertake this Inhumane Piece of *Butchery*, to *defile* their hands in the *innocent Blood* of so many *Thousands* of harmless, peaceable and industrious People, who are their *Fellow-Citizens*, and *Fellow-Commoners*, and by the *Suffrages* of some of whom, many of themselves were *Elected* into that Honourable Society; and to *Act*, or *Enact*, so Barbarous a Tragedy, only to *remove* the groundless *Fears* of a few *Jealous-Headed Alderman and Burgesses of Bury*; who seem to have forgotten what is written of some (whom they in this too nearly resemble) who were said to have been in *great Fear*, where no (cause of) *Fear* was, *Psal. 53. 5.*

They close their Petitions; That out of *Norfolk*, thus.

*Petit. That the true Christian Religion may be preserved from Popish Superstition, and unpolluted with Enthusiastical Innovation.*

That from *Bury*, thus: *That our Posterity may untroubled live, by this early Care of our Laws and Liberties, and we enjoy the wish-for Happiness of a Peaceful life.*

*Obs.* To the First we say, It is strange they should fear the *Christian Religion* should be *polluted* with *Popish Superstitions* by the *Quakers*, who, of all that go under the *Protestant Name*, are generally acknowledged to be *farthest removed* from, and most averse to *Popish Superstitions*; and whose great *Objection* to those of other *Persuasions* has always been, their not having *thoroughly enough* relinquish'd *Popish Superstitions*. And for *Enthusiastical Innovations*; as we do not own the word in that sense, in which they *abusively* apply it to



to us ( tho' *Divine Inspiration*, or God's speaking by his Spirit in the Heart of man, we do own ) so we always offer our *Doctrines* and *Principles* to be *Examined* by the Holy Scriptures ; which were written by *Divine Inspiration*, and are best understood by the Inspiration of the *same Spirit* by which they were written.

To the Second we say, We desire, as well as they, that their Posterity may live untroubled : But we think they might have done well to have considered, that *we have Posterity*, as well as they ; and the like Inducements from natural Affection, to wish that our Posterity may live untroubled as they for theirs. Sure we are, and it is but too obvious, that we have more cause to apprehend Trouble and Danger too, to our Posterity from them and theirs, than they or theirs from us or ours ; For tho' we have done nothing, since we were a People, that might either give Trouble to them, or threaten it to their Posterity ; they stick not here openly to propose, and seek the *Ruin* and *Extirpation* of both *us* and *our Posterity*. They desire they may enjoy the wisht for Happiness of a Peaceful Life. We envy it them not : But God forbid they should *Swim* into it through a *Sea of Innocent Blood*. Can they find no way to the wisht-for Happiness of a Peaceful Life, but by the *Destruction* of their *Fellow-Subjects* and *Peaceable Neighbours* ? Had not *Self-love* (to say no worse) been more prevalent with them (or with their *Envious Guides*, who probably have animated them to these Malicious Counsels) than *Christian Charity* (which seeks the Good and Happiness of all, and teaches to love our Neighbours as our selves) they would have been Content, that *we also should enjoy the wisht-for Happiness of a Peaceful Life*. But since they are so *uncharitable* to grutch us that, and so *unchristian* to seek to bereave us of it ; We humbly address our selves, in the first place, to Almighty God (*the sure Refuge of the Righteous*)



reons) who knows the *Innocency* even of our *Thoughts*: And in the next place, to our *Governours*, the *Witnesses* as well as *Judges* of our *Actions*; unto whom, with humble Confidence, we appeal in the latter, as unto God in the former; Hoping, that the same *Divine Goodness*, which moved the Government to grant this *favourable Indulgence* and *Toleration*, will incline and prevail upon you to *continue* it, both to us, and all other *Protestant Dissenters*, to whose *intended Ruin* also, we look upon this *Assault* upon us to be but the *Praludium*, that under the *Protection* of this *Propitious Government*, we may lead a *quiet and peaceable Life* in all *Godliness and Honesty*, which is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, 1 Tim. 2. 2, 3. And may thence have the *Obligation of Gratitude* added to that of *Duty*, not only to *pray* for, but, in our several Capacities, to *advance and promote* the *Interest, Safety* and *Prosperity* of this Government and Nation.

Thomas Ellwood.

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